The Church
and
Modern Socialism.

AN ESSAY

BY

REV. D. V. WARNER, M. A., (*Columbia*)
Rector of Christ Church, Shelburne, N. S.

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PREFACE.

THIS essay was written at the request of the members of the Rural Deanery of Amherst, Nova Scotia, and read at a meeting of that Deanery held at Lower Stewiacke on May 26th, 1909. It is published at the kind suggestion of members of the Deanery, and of other friends who were good enough to read the manuscript, and to express the opinion that it might prove of some little interest, if offered to the public. The original idea of issuing it as a newspaper or magazine article was abandoned in favor of the present venture.

To those who object to the title on the ground that it is too large and inclusive for a short essay, the explanation is offered that it is not of the writer's own choosing. In this brief survey only a few words can be said about the chief aspects of such an extensive and important subject.

D. V. WARNER.

Shelburne, N. S.,
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The Church and Modern Socialism.

I. Definitions.

IN order to appreciate the relations which exist between these two forces, one must begin with definitions, lest the one be accepted in the narrow sense as a body of Christians, and the other be misjudged and misunderstood. By the Church is meant the whole number of the baptized, lacking at the present time the power which comes from unity in method as well as in aim, an organization existing in and adapted to the purpose of transforming society, of whatever kind, wherever found, claiming to possess means of interpreting, uplifting and advancing life, individual and social.

On the other hand Modern Socialism has been variously defined, and according to its best exponents, at times inaccurately and unfairly. It would seem that one might arrive at a working definition by distinguishing it from Sociology. Both are comparatively recent terms to describe departments of investigation into the relations which obtain, or should obtain, among people

associated in communities for common ends, though the literature claimed for both has a history extending over more than two thousand years. Sociology is a scientific study of society as it is, its aim being primarily the collection and arrangement of facts about it. Though not yet a science in the sense that e. g. Chemistry is a science, it aims to become a complete scientific description of society. Its object is to observe and tabulate, with a view to arriving at general conclusions, the various phenomena of society, from the very earliest stage down to the present complexity. It notes the place of the individual in the community and the influence of his environment upon him. It has to do with types of mind, and to that extent borders on psychology, but its chief way of regarding the individual is as a member of society, or socius.

Socialism, taking its terminology largely from Sociology and Economics, is a protest against the present state of society, and a thoroughly well organized and advancing cause, operating in all countries of higher civilization with the aim of securing equal rights and opportunities for all. The state of society created by the fact that the greater part of the total wealth is in the hands of a small non-producing class, and that the vast majority of the population divides a comparatively small fraction of the wealth, and does practically all the producing labor, is the condition which accounts for the ac-

tivity of the socialist movement and produces its proposed solution. The late Henry George was by no means a foremost political economist, and he has only a small following to-day, but he did say occasionally something to indicate appreciation of the gravity of the problem produced by these conditions. In referring to the fact that not only the greater part of the money of England, but also its means of production and natural resources, are in the hands of the nobility and gentry, he says that every salmon which comes up from the sea might just as well be labelled "For Lord or Lady So and So with God Almighty's compliments!"

Economic socialists look in every country to the ballot as the great means to the end they have in view. With all its faults, it is the business of parliament to govern a country in the interest of the class to which the majority of its members belong. Socialism of this militant type is, therefore, a political movement, aiming to secure by legislation public control of public utilities, and to put an end to alleged abuses in the systems of taxation in operation, whereby, according to the contention, large corporations representing great accumulations of capital avoid their fair share of public burdens, which, directly or indirectly, falls on the defenceless poor. Socialism is defined by one of its best-known advocates as "a social system based on the collective ownership of the means of wealth

production and distribution, carried on co-operatively by all who are physically and mentally able to work . . . . . compensation for services being on the basis of to each according to his deeds, less his proportionate share of social expenses." (Dr. Aley).

II. Socialism Misunderstood.

Misrepresentations of Socialism are common, chiefly unintentional, the commonest among them being that the teaching includes a dividing-up of property. Though Socialists may be inconsistent in saying so, in view of their platform principles, it is true that they have never advocated anything as revolutionary as this. If it be logical, it is the logic of the enemy. No Socialist ever proposed such a plan. What they advocate is a system which will do away with artificial inequalities, and give absolute equality of opportunity. This guards against the charge that they wish to make all men equal. That, they recognize, cannot be done, but the practice of passing on from generation to generation the results of labor, and thus producing inequality among men, would be done away with. Under a Socialist regime it is claimed that the greatest freedom would be allowed, all the greater because enjoyed to the same degree by everybody. Every citizen would be quite free to do as he pleased with the results of his work. He might indulge in expensive tastes for objects of art, fast horses, etc.,

or he might save his money, according to his disposition. The inheritance of this property would be denied, however, to any individual, society being the only possible inheritor of property.

The Budget brought down by Mr. Lloyd-George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the British House of Commons on April 29th, 1909, provides for an inheritance tax varying from four per cent. for estates from £5,000 to £10,000 to fifteen per cent. for estates of over £1,000,000. Socialism also taxes inheritances, but the tax being one hundred per cent. the principle of the inheritance tax as at present applied is pushed to its logical conclusion. It is interesting to note that amid the storm of remonstrances provoked by the Budget from representatives of industries affected by increased taxation, charges of socialistic tendencies were made upon the Chancellor.

With regard to the position of the sexes, and to marriage, the Socialist contention is frankly for equal civil and political rights for both men and women. The only way in which, according to its upholders, the Socialist doctrine would affect marriage, would be to free women from financial dependence. It is claimed, however, that the effect of this would be that wealth, ambition, desire for a home or for social position as foundations for marriage would disappear. As marriage contracts built on these unnatural foundations are those which provide material for

divorce-court scandals, it might appear that in this part of their propaganda the Socialists have something worth serious thought, at any rate.

III. The Socialist and Religion.

When, however, we come to the Socialist attitude toward religion, we are met at the very outset by a statement which shows that if there has been misunderstanding, it has not been all on one side. After asserting that the ethical teachings of Christianity are in no way opposed to Socialism, and saying that the Golden Rule of Christianity might well be the Socialist motto, the *Socialist Catechism*, an official publication, answers the question : "Is Socialism opposed to religion?" by the astonishing statement and contrast : "Religion concerns man's future life ; Socialism his present life." If we are to infer from this that Socialists hold that religion does not concern man's present life, then we are bound to take exception to that phase of the system at any rate.

But when we come to consider the position of the Socialist toward organized Christianity, and their way of appreciating and understanding the teachings of Christ, the position they occupy is at once seen to be a very strong one, supported not by isolated texts of Scripture, not by warping and twisting, but by a general view of the New Testament. In the Anglican Communion there are many ardent Socialists among the clergy, and the

official attitude of that Church toward Socialism ante-dates by several years the appearance of either a Labor Party or a Socialist organ in England, astonishing as such a statement may seem when we consider the innate conservatism which is a leading feature of that Communion. In 1888, at the Lambeth Conference, the following resolution was passed: "The Christian Church is bound, following the teaching of her Master, to aid every wise endeavor which has for its object the material and moral welfare of the poor. Her Master taught her that all men are brethren, not because they share the same blood, but because they have a common heavenly Father. He further taught her that if any members of this spiritual family were greater, richer, or better than the rest, they were bound to use their special means or ability in the service of the whole . . . . It will contribute no little to draw together the various classes of society if the clergy endeavor in sermons and lectures to set forth the true principle of society, showing how Property is a trust, to be administered for the good of Humanity, and how much of what is good and true in Socialism is to be found in the precepts of Christ." The Church has therefore foreshadowed the Socialist movement to a great extent, set the seal of its approval upon it in general terms, and that may account for the fact that today, in England, where from the conditions of life, and the constant sharp contrast between extremes in social position and opportunity, Social-

ism is becoming a power which will have to be reckoned with politically, the clergy of the National Church are among its trusted leaders.

IV. Stage of the Socialist Movement.

This is true of a few, but Socialism as a modern movement, distinguished from the principles which it maintains in common with the Church's teaching, is as yet too recent in origin to have come before the whole Church as an issue to be dealt with, if I may so express it. A few clergy are investigating it, a smaller number are welcomed in the councils of its foremost exponents and upholders, but the whole Christian Church has not yet taken Socialism seriously, at any rate on this side of the Atlantic. The question in the minds of thousands is, will it ever reach a point where it *must* be considered, where it will not do to avoid it? And the answer one would like to give to a question of that sort would be: If there is any *possibility* that Socialism may at any time in the near future become a power strong enough to cope with social problems, why wait for that time to come? It has been very well said of new inventions, movements, etc., that they all have to pass through various phases before success is finally won. The first is a general indifference on the part of the public; the next is more or less active hostility; the third reluctant acceptance; and the last, a claim on the part of their former enemies to have been the

real originators. It may be that Socialism has passed the first of these stages; let us hope, for the sake of what may be the case later on, that the second, if it must be undergone, will be short. How much hostility there is on the part of the Church it would be hard to say, but governments have certainly in many countries reached the stage of active, open warfare against the movement. Socialists claim that this indicates progress, and the saner and more experienced among them are disposed not to force matters, but to allow their leaven to work slowly toward what they naturally regard as ultimate success. That the contention of the Socialists is by no means visionary is clearly shown by the remarkable results which for the past fifteen years have followed upon the establishment of Socialist rule in several important French municipalities. Though the French Socialist reminds us that such examples are not fair illustrations of Socialism, but only the best it can do when constantly hampered by a hostile central government, some really remarkable changes have been made.

V. Roubaix.

In the city of Roubaix, for example, an important manufacturing centre of the Department of Lille, eight years of Socialist rule, as compared with the preceding eight years of Bourgeois administration, resulted in a direct improvement in every institution of a public character, in

every department of civic affairs, and in the establishment of several new agencies for the benefit of the public.

The child and its welfare are especially the consideration of the city council from its birth, when in the case of the very poor free medical attendance is provided, through every phase of its education. Delicate and anemic children are sent to the seaside in summer at the city's expense. And yet with all this extra public expense, the city accounts showed last year a balance in favor of the city of more than $267,000. This result was reached chiefly by collecting from wealthy corporations which had formerly avoided their full share of the public expense, to the very limit of the amount imposed.

VI. A Former Problem.

We can all follow the progress of the new science of the nineteenth century through the various stages mentioned above, and we are all of us quite aware of the effect to-day of the blind conservatism of the Church of a few decades ago in its determination to maintain traditional attitudes toward Holy Scripture, in spite of the new light which we in our day can see God Himself was throwing on the difficulties of that Sacred Book. The agitation belongs to the past, it is true. Science and Religion are being understood to supplement, rather than overlap each other. We need both, and we recognize their respective

spheres all the better on account of what was once called the conflict between them. We are not responsible for that supposed conflict ; it belongs to an age happily past, and it is probable that in the Anglican Communion, where the greatest mistakes were made first, and the most important results achieved for Christianity in general during the reconstruction period which followed, practically every thinking man it includes, clergy and laity alike, has a different, wider and from every standpoint more satisfactory way of regarding Holy Scripture than prevailed among their predecessors of two generations ago. But the mischief done remains among the multitudes who do not or cannot think, and the conflict above referred to, which they suppose to be still raging, provides them with an excuse for indifference to Christianity, not sure, as they imagine, of its Old Testament foundations. They wander over the battle fields of fifty years ago, and exult in the discovery of exploded shells, while the present day struggle is taking place far away. No ! The difficulty of to-day is not with the half-educated man. Let him alone, and go ahead. The time will come when he will realize how far the Church is really ahead of him, and it may be that early twentieth-century missionary activity among *men* in the Church may be the beginning of the new age when, among other important things, he will understand and appreciate the position of historic Christianity in its attitude toward science.

VII. The Present One.

The problem of the Church of to-day is with the laboring man, the man of toil, the man of the union or brotherhood, the man who is striving to make terms with capital, and who feels his power to-day as never before. This is the man to whom the Socialist appeals, whom he is trying to rouse to an appreciation of the truth that the improvement in his position rests entirely with himself, and that when he is finally convinced that political parties represent only the employing classes in their statesmanship, however much they must depend on *all* classes for support, he will rise and place his own representatives in the legislature of his country, and have it governed to favor those who produce, and secure to them a fair proportion of what they produce. The problem of the Church of to-day is with this man. Whether he is judging the Church harshly or not is a question not directly pertinent here. The point is that he does judge the Church, and already roused to a sense of his power by elaborate organizations extending to almost every sort of skilled human occupation and to many that require no particular skill, and with a smattering of knowledge about old controversies obtained from periodicals and from the cheap lecturer, the working man has arrived at the stage where he thinks he can ignore the Church. That is his position in thousands of cases. He needs leading, he requires the Gospel, and both are being supplied to him

by advocates of modern Socialism, whose activity just now outside the Church, though not outside Christianity, is being carried on at a wonderful rate of progress by means of socialistic clubs, lectures, periodicals, pamphlets, etc.

VIII. Our Lord and Society.

Let us examine now the Socialist's position with regard to Christ and Christianity, and see if the statement made about isolated texts can be substantiated. How did Christ come into the world? This is a kind of pivotal question with which one may begin. God the Son became Man is the Christian belief. He could have come in any class He chose, and His own people expected Him to come as a great Prince. Had He come in that way, had He been born to the world's purple, to inherit all the power of an Oriental potentate, all the pomp and luxury which are so characteristically Eastern, influential men of His own nation would have welcomed Him. But He was born in a stable. As a Man, He was a laborer, an artizan, a workman. He worked at a trade until He was thirty, and then choosing for companions a few other working men, He tramped about the country as One who had not where to lay His head, doing innumerable works of mercy besides preaching spiritual regeneration. He blessed the poor, condemned the thoughtless and idle rich, denounced the proud teachers and leaders of the national religion, and,

after three brief years of this revolutionary activity, He was executed by the law of the land. Though detested by the religious authorities of the day, it was said of Him, significantly enough, that the "common people heard Him gladly." The question His enemies asked in scorn is a question that persists. It is needed to-day, and is being asked anew: "Is not this the Carpenter?" The Socialist tells us that the work of Christ as Carpenter, not Master only but Master Builder, in Human Society, has never been done; that He outlined the work and left it for organized Christianity to do; and that His reconstruction has been thwarted by the Church's departing from the original plan; the specifications have not been followed. He points out that, as a matter of fact, Christianity is ahead of the Church. The Church professes only at the best a miserable apology for the teaching of her Head. These strictures are severe, and no doubt open up room for discussion. They are one-sided, as harsh criticisms generally are, but they contain a certain amount of truth. There is a little fire somewhere, the amount of smoke showing that it is well concealed.

IX. His Teaching New.

The teaching of Christ was much more than a complete reversal of what the Jews expected. It was a new phenomenon in the world's history. No one before had ever thought of placing on

such a basis the message of social regeneration. Even the noblest of Greek philosophers, constructors of ideal states, had failed to take account of labor, much less dignify it by personal association. They had based their ideal republics on slavery. Plato considered the masses as possessing but half a soul, and Aristotle regarded slaves as "living machines" and women as "nature's failures to produce men." Women were individuals of an inferior species and a slave was an utterly despicable being. (Politics Bk. I, Chap. 13). In Athens of 309 B. C. there are said to have been 400,000 slaves out of a total population of 515,000.

But by the Incarnation of the Son of God, not only was labor given its true position, and dignified as never before, but the unity of the whole race of men was for all time proclaimed. Humanity in its solidarity was taken into the Divine, and every human being declared to be infinitely sacred and precious, and with a right to the fullest development. Any exploitation of man by man, which tends to infringe upon that right; any measures which interfere with the freedom of the less fortunate multitude to the interest of the successfully grasping and uncrupulous few, are so many departures from the Christian standard.

The indications we find that Christ's real work and the nature of His mission were understood from the first by those most closely associ-

ated with Him are interesting to set over against the want of appreciation shown by the people generally. That His doctrine would be revolutionary seemed to be known to His Mother before His birth ; otherwise it is difficult to explain the language of the *Magnificat :* "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away." The song which proclaimed His Birth pointed to social fellowship as the accompaniment of true religion : "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Whether by intuition, the foreseeing power of the prophet, or how we are to explain it, John the Baptist knew also about the message of Christ and its import. "Every valley," he cried, "shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low." And to the inquiry what they should do, his instructions to people were to practice plain communism : "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath food, let him do likewise." (R. V. Luke III, 11). Socialists make the claim that this is precisely what they are trying to do —to level up the valleys in society by bringing its hills and mountains low, to scatter the proud, to satisfy the hungry by an equal distribution, and, in general, to change the present very unchristian state of society, producing conditions

under which the poor are sent empty away, and the wealth of the rich increases without any effort or care of theirs.

How significant it is, too, that our Lord's first public utterance proclaimed the real truth of His mission in terms which agreed precisely with the intuitions of His Mother and John the Baptist. On the occasion when, as a young Man, He went into the synagogue at Nazareth and stood up in the service to read from the Scripture, He chose those words of Isaiah which referred to the power of the Spirit of the Lord to anoint for the prophetic work of preaching good tidings to the poor, of proclaiming release to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, liberty to them that are bruised. In order that there need be no misunderstanding, He referred this great work directly to Himself. "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

X. Duty—Two Kinds.

In considering the teaching of Christ, Socialism maintains that modern Christianity has not given a fair presentation of its *two* sides. We hear, and we need to hear, much about our duty to God, but Christ declared of the other duty that it was "like unto it." Both parts of duty are taught in the Church Catechism, and if the Socialist contention be right, we need not look for some new form of Christianity, but make more of the old. That is the substance of Socialistic

teaching all through. It advocates a return to the Christianity of the Man, Jesus Christ. It is not asking us to be unorthodox, but to be really orthodox, more especially about this matter of duty to our neighbor, put by the most profound of the Evangelists before the other duty: "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen." (I John IV, 20.)

XI. Socialists and Hymnology.

In every part of our Lord's Ministry the Socialist finds that the attitude of the Master toward life and duty which he unhesitatingly adopts as the ideal for Socialism, contrasts more or less sharply with the dispensation of the teachings of that Master, as carried on by organized religious bodies of to-day. The Socialist e. g. considers that much of the hymnology of our day is misleading and in many cases positively untrue, when the sentiments which it contains are set side by side with the work and message of Christ. To take a few examples: "There is a blessed home," "Brief life is here our portion," ,"Oh, what the joy and the glory must be," "Oh Paradise, Oh Paradise, 'tis weary waiting here," "I'm but a stranger here; heaven is my home," "Weary of earth and laden with sin," "Jerusalem, my happy home," "Jerusalem on high, my song and city is," "For thee, O dear, dear country." Such hymns may be

very beautiful from a poetical or sentimental point of view, but it can hardly be denied that they tend to depreciate this life in favor of that beyond, while, on the contrary, in every other enterprise the tendency in the normal man is to cling to this life with the greatest tenacity. There is practically no such thing as finding it weary waiting here, or looking to heaven and longing to enter in. We do not feel like strangers here, or long for any other country. Contrast this sort of false Christian sentiment with the general result of the majority of Christ's miracles, and we find that our Lord restored people to health and life, enabling them to go back to work and duty, and to enjoy the measure of time allotted to men. A large part of the Master's effort was devoted to fighting disease and premature death, dispelling the one, and restoring to life those whom the other had overtaken.

XII. Our Lord's Signs.

In the Greek these acts are called by a word which really means signs,—significant deeds. And the Socialist concludes that they should have more significance for us than they commonly have ; that we are not followers of Christ unless we are fighting against conditions prevalent among a large part of the population everywhere, which make for disease and death, to say nothing of hardship, misery and unhappiness. And Christ has said that this kind of practical Christ-

ianity is a test of belief on Him: "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also." (John XIV, 12.) A striking indication of the need of more practical Christianity is furnished by the melancholy fact that in England, according to a well-known authority, of children born in the laboring classes 55 per cent. die before reaching the age of five years, as against 18 per cent. among the middle and upper classes.

The Master, among other severe sayings, had one which applies with force to those who despise or offend little ones. What, then, must be His estimate of present-day Christians, people professing His Name and teaching, living, unmoved it may be, amid this ghastly slaughter of the innocents? What can He think of us, who hear Sunday after Sunday from the altar, in our most solemn service, the command, "Thou shalt do no murder," unless we are laboring with all our power to prevent this wholesale destruction of children? "For," says the Socialist, "unless we are endeavoring to check this, their blood is on our hands."

The signs of Christ teach us also to increase the comfort of people as He did when He fed the multitudes, and their enjoyment, as He did at Cana of Galilee.

XIII. His Parables.

As examples of our Lord's parables in their bearing upon the relation of the Church to

Modern Socialism the great series of seven in Matthew XIII, illustrating various sides of the truth about the Kingdom of Heaven are favorites among Socialists, for there they see the ideal of the Kingdom which to them is a human brotherhood, set forth in language of which they unhesitatingly approve, and adopt as part of their propaganda. Christ came to bind men together in love, as well as to uplift and purify their individual souls, and these parables are hardly intelligible, unless understood in a social sense, but taken in that sense they are at once seen to be full of meaning, and adapted to conditions now existing. They show the great need of such an organization to operate among and uplift all classes of men, to make them conscious of common needs for their common nature.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed." Growth from small beginnings to great usefulness providing what people in every place need. Like the birds of the air who come from all directions to lodge in the branches of the full-grown mustard-tree, so the nations of the world should be able to look to the Kingdom of Heaven to provide by the stimulus it should give at any rate to the improvement of social conditions for justice, fraternity, freedom, peace and plenty under the rule of the accepted will of God.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven." That is, it is adapted to exist in the very midst

of, and by its inherent power to transform, society. There is no place under modern conditions of life for ascetic Christianity. The world had many centuries of that. If the Church is to carry out the phase of its mission described in this parable, it must be in the closest touch with men in all walks of life. Leaven means *contact*,—constant contact ; it is imbedded in that which it is to raise. Our Lord did not fear defilement when associating and breaking bread with publicans and sinners. Those who did, belong to classes whom he continually denounced for the sham and hypocrisy of their lives.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field." The Kingdom does not consist merely of a number of persons of the same kind, but of a vast multitude of every kind. It is a field where tares and wheat grow together. The servants of the Master are aware only in a general way of the presence of the tares ; they would not be able to remove them without danger to the wheat. Together they are to grow then until the harvest. The point of the parable seems to be that tares are exactly like wheat until the ear appears. Only the Master knows the hearts of men ; we have to judge as best we can by the outward appearance, and in this there is great danger of being mistaken. But anyone can judge by results, and this way of estimating was especially mentioned by Christ: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net, cast into the sea." Every kind of people should come within the sweep of the net of Christianity. Here we have the *friends* of the Kingdom at work, as distinguished from its enemies in the preceding parable. Every kind is gathered in. Many who want only loaves and fishes, many cranks of all sorts, many a Judas, creep or climb in, drawn by various attractions. Low motives may be abandoned, people may be encouraged to be ashamed of them, and to co-operate for the good of the Kingdom, and so the Kingdom comes more and more to its fulness of justice and freedom, of abundance and joy.

There is another parable, and in some respects the most important of all, to which the Socialist turns for further confirmation of his contention that modern Christianity lacks the spirit of Christ. It is the great Parable of the Judgment in Matthew XXV. That parable tells us what will settle our fate in the next world, and nothing is said about church-going, or orthodoxy, or conversion, because these are nothing unless they lead to practical results. Our final salvation or condemnation will depend, we are told, upon our acts of social usefulness, or the lack of them, as the case may be. We shall be placed on His Right Hand if we have considered the needs of others, if we have, in other words, had a faith which was productive of works. What better illustration can we have of the solidarity of the race which the Incarnation of the Son of

God involves, and which Socialism maintains to the fullest extent, than the fact that our Lord here identifies Himself even with a poor, despised wretch in a prison, an Eastern prison too, where the conditions of inmates would be a living death! To those on the left he says: "Depart, ye cursed," not because you were heathen or agnostic, not for anything you thought or said, but for what you did not *do*. "I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat." Christ speaks in the introduction to this parable of the *nations* being summoned to judgment. In this the Socialist sees our Lord's social teaching, invariably found side by side with His instructions for the individual life. One cannot be a good Christian merely by living a good private life. One must be a good citizen, and citizens make or mar nations, here brought to judgment. That nation will attain a high place in God's favor, which takes care to see that its people are all fed, clothed, housed and have justice extended to them.

For a comparison with social teaching in the Old Testament one might recall in this connection the words of the Fifth Commandment. Apart from the value to individual children under their parents' direction and rule at home, the Commandment teaches the social fact that respect for law and order which is the basis of good citizenship must be inculcated in the home. Those who learn obedience to parents there, will be the strength of the nation as adults. And such

nations will remain "long in the land" they occupy.

It has been urged that the precepts laid down in the Sermon on the Mount are ideal, and cannot, under present conditions, be carried out in practice. Though this must be admitted, and is generally recognized by reasonable Socialists, the statement is really a confession that something is radically wrong with modern society if Christ's teaching cannot be applied. Does it represent a state of things with which Christians can rest content? Real Christianity is, in fact, far ahead of us, and is a sort of ideal at all times, our attainments being at best but caricatures of that which the teaching of Christ, if actually followed, would involve.

XIV. The Lord's Prayer—Social Throughout.

In their attitude toward the Lord's Prayer, Socialists point out that although given originally for private use, every part of the prayer has a social application. The very first word seems to be intended to take us out of individualism. Those who have not thought of their brethren on earth, cannot, it is urged, address their Father in Heaven in any other than a perfunctory manner. In the second and third petitions we are reminded of our free-will. The Divine plan has made us free and imperfect, which, with all its disadvantages, is infinitely better than being automata! The petitions represent an effort to-

wards an ideal, and from this the Socialist concludes that Christians are bound to be idealists, or, in their attitude toward social conditions, Utopians. If the language of the Lord's Prayer means anything, it means that we proclaim ourselves fellow-workers with God, with a perfect social state as our aim. Ruskin puts the case briefly thus. "When you pray 'Thy Kingdom come,' you either want it to come or you do not. If you do not, you should not pray for it. If you do, you must do more than pray for it, you must live and labor for it."

"Give us this day our daily bread" is a petition entirely social, and world-wide in its scope. It recognizes the truth that there is always need and want somewhere. Night and the end of the day's work here mean morning and the beginning of work at the antipodes, where there are hungry people we may be sure.

It has been said that the following petition has nothing to do with Socialism. The first part has not, but the condition is undoubtedly social. "As we forgive them that trespass against us." As we shall be judged by our treatment of our brother, so by our conduct toward him are we forgiven. Christ never allows us to get away from our neighbor. The common assertion of the right of private judgment—"No man shall come between me and my God," is only half true after all. The right is supposed to have been gained only after centuries of struggle, but is it

not likely to lead to a selfish individualism, a feeling that we are entitled to appropriate the special consideration of God for our special needs? The other side of the truth is that every man comes between me and my God, and that condition we place upon ourselves every time we use the Lord's Prayer.

XV. Sacraments.

The Sacraments are regarded by Socialists as being both on their side. In Baptism every child is claimed as being in a real sense, and that the most important, the equal of every other, difference of birth in palace or cottage to the contrary notwithstanding. We do not wait for election or any proof of what *sort* of follower of Christ it will be, but for the simple reason that it is a human being, we bring it into living, vital relation with Christ the Head. It has a right to be a present inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. One enthusiastic Socialist has made the discovery that the term "original sin" of the Church's teaching in connection with Holy Baptism refers primarily to an innate tendency to individualism in the unregenerate. But this may, no doubt, be set down as more ingenious than probable.

And the Holy Communion has also for the Socialist, as its out-standing feature, the fact that it is, too, a Sacrament of equality, not absolute of course, but of equality of opportunity. The name itself proclaims that those who partake of it are

bound to live in fellowship with one another. There is a hymn with which we are all familiar which speaks of "mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won." "But," says the Socialist, "it is of more practical importance, both as a part of our private preparation for the Holy Communion, and as a general guiding principle, to have cordial and satisfactory relations with those whose work is going on." In this great Sacrament the Church has maintained the communal character of the highest form of worship. The Didache puts it in this plain way: "If you are sharers in imperishable things, how much more must you be sharers in those things that are perishable." Or in other words, "if communicants, then communists." When a prominent English Socialist, Rev. S. D. Headlam, said that those who came to Holy Communion should be holy communists, he caused a stir, and shocked a great many people, but he was only making a logical statement of his own convictions. The communism of the early Church has been forgotten, and a large part of the energy of Christians is devoted to an insistence on the peculiar qualities which distinguish, or are supposed to distinguish, their own respective and competitive sects, and, in their jealousy of and conflict with each other, selfish individualism is exalted until they almost persuade themselves it is a Christian virtue, while the communism of the early Church which was a chief element of its strength, surrounded as it was by enemies, seems to have been forgot-

ten, or considered to have passed away for good.

XVI. Common First-Century Ground.

Thus both the Anglican defender and the Socialist reformer look to the Church of the apostolic age for inspiration; the former to establish his contention that the communion which he represents has not separated in principle from "the faith once delivered to the saints," the latter to urge a return to the principle of the original communism which he advocates, and from which he insists that the Church has unwisely departed. Socialism is new only in name; the principle is as old as Christianity, and we are told that the Christian Church is intended to be a society not merely for teaching a number of elaborate doctrines—though they are all important for the theoretical and philosophical defence of the faith; not even primarily for maintaining a beautiful ritual and worship, calculated to inspire and sustain the spirit of devotion, very valuable though all that may be if people are to have their faculties developed, but the Church is here to-day chiefly for doing on a large scale throughout the world, what her Master, when here in the flesh, did on a small scale in Palestine. She is pledged to set her face against suffering and distress, wherever found, and to seek to eliminate not merely the effects, but the causes of the lot of so many in this selfish world of individualism.

XVII. Our Lord and the Poor.

But it may be urged that our Lord said, "Blessed are ye poor," and "The poor ye have always with you." He did, and Socialists ask us not to wrench these famous passages from their context, but to consider them under the circumstances in which they were used. Behind such parts of our Lord's teaching they tell us that individualistic Christianity is entrenched today, whence it draws the inference that poverty is a necessary accompaniment of modern advanced civilization. The poor are to be advised to put up with their lot here, and look confidently for a great reward hereafter. Resignation and submission are to be inculcated as the leading Christian virtues. The logical conclusion of this interpretation of Christianity has already been reached, or at any rate broached, in the astounding proposal recently made in New York by the pastor of a wealthy congregation, that a Church be organized for millionaires exclusively. But even there the intoxication produced by tremendous wealth had not reached the stage where such a proposal could be received with approval. The suggestion roused what real Christianity there was latent in the special exclusive set to which the pastor belonged, and was condemned. The Socialist is able, when occasion requires, to employ the strong weapon of ridicule, and tendencies of this sort caused one of them to remark that as a matter of fact and daily experience in

our Christianity "the rich have managed to squeeze through the needle's eye in large numbers, and are now comfortably established in the poor man's Kingdom," whose teaching is arranged to suit their special circumstances. The state is no better off than the Church in this respect. Money is the key which unlocks the doors to political or even scholastic honors.

To return now to the well-known passages about the poor, and the Socialist interpretation of them. When our Lord said: "Blessed are ye poor," He spoke to the plain, rough, unlettered fishermen and others who were learning from Him, and He contrasted their condition with that of the Scribes, Pharisees and other leaders in Church and State, who were engaged at that time in exploiting men of the classes to which the disciples belonged, and in persecuting the Master. Our Lord said that the disciples, in spite of their poverty, were better and happier men than the classes who opposed them, and this was a simple statement of fact, but it does not follow that the teaching drawn from it partly, is entitled to point to the grinding poverty found in modern centers of culture and civilization as the normal condition of life for anybody. And: "The poor ye have always with you," is readily understood to be equivalent to: "The poor ye *shall* have always with you." But if Christ had said that, it would have been a direct contradiction to the rest of His teaching. If He had said that when His Kingdom was finally established

there would still be poverty. He would have been inconsistent. It was not a prophecy at all. He looked back over the history of His people in retrospect, glanced over the existing condition of the nation, noted the persistence of poverty, and stated as a comment that the poor were always with His people, historically, as well as at that time. The Socialist argues that is not the same thing as saying there always will be poverty.

XVIII. Christian Justice.

The Socialist claims that he merely looks for justice from the Church. This virtue represents a watchword with him. Without it, brotherhood in any real sense is impossible. And what he means is not that he hopes the Church will treat him fairly and give him a hearing, but that he may find the Church possessing and adhering to justice as an essential of Christianity. The word occurs 86 times in the Bible, and is identical in meaning with righteousness, but like the word Charity it has been largely emptied of meaning. When our Lord said: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness," He meant what we would understand by substituting the word *justice* for righteousness.

The Socialist of theAnglo-Saxon world looks hopefully, as we might expect him to, toward the historic Church of the English speaking people; toward the communion which commits itself to everything for which he contends, at least theoretically, by its authorized formula for beginning

Morning and Evening Prayer: "Dearly beloved *brethren*," and which in its Sacraments and approved teaching maintains steadily the principle of equality of opportunity for all, and special advantages for none. That is the theory at any rate which underlies all our religious propaganda, and this is not from our side in our anxiety to secure weight of the Socialist movement, but is a ready and cordial admission from the Socialists themselves. Their candid criticism is that this original and precious endowment so well calculated to serve us, in our endeavor to do our part in bringing the nations into the fold of Christ, has been overlaid and hampered by the violence of the rich, who have taken the Kingdom by force, and they cry to us: "Come out from among them." They bid us take our stand of the deeds as well as the doctrines of the early Church, and the men who talk thus earnestly are the men who have a Gospel to which the workingman of to-day is eagerly listening, whether the Church's message draws him or not. This man has not the education, probably, of the non-producer and non-thinker of the class above him, and if the Church is not reaching and helping him it is for a different reason. He has a more pronounced feeling toward the Church; in the other case it is mere indifference in the average man. There is no question about the relative usefulness to society of these two men, and Socialism, which is espousing the cause of the workingman and artizan, may be pointing the way toward a genuine re-

generation of society. It remains for us to see that the Church shall lead, if this be really the case, and the opportunity is not yet past. The more reasonable of the Socialist leaders are ready to recognize that Socialism is a comparatively new movement. The name dates only from 1835, and its experience in struggling against greed and jealousy and the grasping selfishness of mankind, is a short one. It is just learning, by limited but painful experience, the magnitude of a task upon which the Church has been engaged for more than eighteen centuries.

XIX. The Talents.

Having seen now, in outline, the main features of the indictment which Socialism levels against modern Christianity, it may well be asked what objections may be taken to the chief features of the Socialist programme for reorganizing society. Many have been offered, for, as we have seen, Socialism has reached the stage where some notice must be taken of it, and many anti-socialists have been developed within the past twenty-five years. Leaving out the objections which are inspired by nothing but inherent hostility to change, and the worship of the past merely because it is past, there are real, serious difficulties, noted not only by the opponents of Socialism, but not yet solved satisfactorily by many of its leaders. And the chief of these would seem to be the great differences which we

find between individual people. This is the leading objection, on account of the scriptural warrant for it. If some of our Lord's parables may be capable of a socialistic interpretation, what about the Parable of the Talents? (Matthew xxv, 14 sqq.) Here it is difficult to see where equality of opportunity comes in, since one received five and another two talents. Socialists are in the habit of explaining this by stating that the only valuable part is the last, "to him that hath shall be given," etc., and that industry, faithfulness and fidelity to the commonwealth will be rewarded by possession of the Kingdom; and, besides, that the parable is best understood of communities or nations. The fact of special privilege, however, seems to stick, though, as we might expect, it entails corresponding responsibilities. If it be noted in explanation that the talents refer to natural endowments in skill and capability, the difficulty remains, even though it takes another form. This is the chief exception to the Socialist contention, taken by leading economists in the United States, where within the last few months several prominent men have departed from their usually guarded language, and have asserted in plain terms their estimate of the Socialist theory. To them it would seem that no principle could be quite so absurd as the theory upon which the Constitution of the United States rests, viz.: that men are by the Creator intended to be free and equal. Whether or not we can regard the men who criticize thus as the

products of conditions which do not allow freedom and equality of opportunity to all, or whether they are right in asserting, as they do, that Socialism is entirely visionary, time will tell. This much is true, that in what is theoretically the most democratic of nations, the men who might be supposed to read the signs of the times best are saying now that individualism, and therefore capitalism, are immovably fixed as conditions of the national life, the Constitution is in effect a dead document, and economic Socialism a dream. Their conclusions are based on the fact of the vast differences which obtain between individuals, and which, in the long run, account for the present social state. They tell us that human nature is much too large a fact, possessing too many phases to be levelled by legislation. It is neither desirable nor wise to attempt to bridge over the various gulfs which separate men from men as their natural endowments vary. The best we have ever done in any other department of effort has been accomplished by co-operating with nature. Here we attempt to defy her if we accept the Socialist's argument as valid. The Socialists themselves go so far as to say that nothing is so shallow as to think that social disorder is due to economic machinery which can be altered without any change in men's hearts. The disorder is due to the evil which made the machinery. You cannot, it is true, make humanity good, until you have made its environment good, and you cannot change the environ-

ment without changing the men. The two must improve each other.

XX. Things Overlooked by Socialists.

Another fact, which is really a corollary of the above, is that industry and thrift seldom fail to win their reward, and multitudes of people everywhere, more especially in a new country like ours, with nothing as capital but health and strength and will, are pushing themselves forward from the poverty in which they were born to comparative comfort, whereas ultra-Socialism seems at times almost to proceed on the theory that classes and castes are fixed, and that the son of the poor man in spite of natural ability is held down, while the son of the nobleman or wealthy manufacturer, without the natural endowments, has every opportunity for culture and education, not to mention his ultimate inheritance of his father's property. We know this is by no means always the case, even in a country of long-established civilization, such as England, and with us it can hardly even be called the rule.

There are also certain facts about capital, overlooked by Socialists in their efforts to point to its accumulation as a great evil of our complicated civilization. The very fact of its accumulation indicates, generally speaking, the wisdom with which it has been invested. And in spite of all the taunts and abuses hurled against the results of the employment of capital,

the fact remains that the facilities which it provides are open to general public use at, in most cases, reasonable charges. In the majority of cases the scale of charges, for transportation for example, is fixed by provincial or state statute. The skilled laborer who travels, say two miles in fifteen or twenty minutes, along several streets to attend a Socialistic meeting or demonstration in the evening, rides in an electric car provided by the very capital which will be so vigorously attacked at the meeting, at a total outlay of ten cents for the round trip. It is easy to condemn, in a general way, the possession of capital, and many who claim to be Socialists are actively opposed to it without a due consideration of what capital is doing to provide facilities which affect our lives at every turn and in a hundred unsuspected ways. The Socialist who deposits his surplus earnings with a bank or trust company is, by so doing, taking advantage of the facilities which capital has provided. Capital constructed the bank, and its employment in carrying on great commercial enterprises results in securing for the depositor a certain sum for the use of his funds, which he may draw out at any time, and which are guaranteed to him in case the bank should have to suspend operations, because he is the first consideration in such a case. It depends largely on one's point of view how one regards this large question of capital and its uses.

Although modern Socialism has never successfully met these difficulties, it would not be true to say that even their combined effect can dispose of it. Socialism, or at any rate the modern phase of it, has not really been engaging the attention of men long enough to enable them to cope with all the problems and objections it will have to meet. The fact that it has won the serious consideration of men everywhere is in itself no small triumph. We hear very little of it in Nova Scotia politically, because our country is so favored as to have only to a very limited extent the conditions which produce it. But even here the indications seem to point to the time when Socialism may become a real political issue. In one county of this province a labor party has been organized, which will have a candidate in the field at the next election, and though this may not be the same thing as the unconcealed Socialism of England or Germany, who can say that it will not some day be regarded as the beginning of what will then be a Socialist party proper? Before two decades we may be called upon to express our opinion at the polls of this province of the principles of economic Socialism. It may be objected that this is discussing politics rather than the relations between Socialism and the Church. But no view of modern Socialism can avoid that, for wherever the economic form of the movement is progressing,

it is candidly and avowedly political, and must be dealt with as such. It need hardly be said that it differs radically from any form of party politics now existing.

XXII. Kingsley.

Socialism, in the full sense of the word, is a much greater thing than Collectivism, which is, after all, only a means to that larger end. Our Lord nowhere insists upon Collectivism, for if He had it would have been regarded as an ideal, and human selfishness would have kept us as far from it as we are now from the ideal which He was in His life. He taught for all time, and so there is no such thing as arriving at a stage where His teaching and example are not in advance of us, so as to give us room for development. Many years before the present political phase of the Socialistic movement had begun to take form, Kingsley prepared the case, so to speak, for the Church in *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*. Even the severe criticism of the Church found in those famous works, which was timely, and I think we can honestly say effective, cannot conceal the equally open admiration of her way of working when it is carried on as close to the Christian theory as possible, and with every effort made to eliminate abuses. The term "Christian Socialism" which appeared at that time to describe the reform for which Kingsley and his followers contended, was objected to, and is yet, on the

ground that the words are out of place in this association. At the first the term was considered a mis-nomer, on account, probably, of the intensely individualistic point of view even of otherwise upright and in every way respectable Christians, possibly too respectable, if respectability be one of the faults of English churchmen, as it is often alleged. Christianity was old and thoroughly established in England; it formed the very atmosphere of the nation's growth and life. Socialism was new and without status, therefore to be regarded with suspicion. The connection of the two ideas in this abrupt way naturally caused a shock, from which many have not yet recovered. English Christianity, as interpreted by hundreds of thousands of its adherents, had been understood as the way of preparing for the *next* world; Socialism has largely to do with the problems of *this* one, following, as it believes, the teaching of Christ, who said very little about Heaven, but a great deal about the Kingdom of Heaven.

An objection might reasonably be taken to the compound term from the entirely opposite point of view that Socialism is necessarily Christian, and that the adjective is therefore not needed, and for this reason Socialists themselves have in many cases dropped the use of the expression, and if they use an alternative term, generally call themselves Collectivists.

XXIII. Conclusion.

Christianity is not individualism. Socialists have come to admit that. But the Church may be too strongly individualistic. Nor is Christianity all that the Socialists are contending for. It coincides with neither one nor the other, but in reality covers both, and every year brings a better appreciation of these complementary truths to both Socialists and Indiviualists. The age of religious competition is passing away; and that of a better social activity and understanding among Christians is, let us hope, just before us. The Church has made mistakes enough; even its members are well aware of that. Its representatives have, like the people, committed disastrous sins, and there are those within the camp yet, as there have always been, dipping their hand in the dish with the Master, and, like the original traitor, ready to sell him to minister to their own personal greed. There are foes within as well as problems without. And with this admission of its own difficulties, the Church is more than ready to join forces with the new movement which has revived its old teaching. It is prepared to supplement Socialist activity by reminding the leaders of it that men cannot be converted by pointing to their own interests, strange as it may seem. The fact that Socialism has spread in the past, and is to-day advancing most rapidly in countries where people have for hundreds of years professed Christianity, shows

that men must have a moral ideal held up to them, in addition to the strong appeal made to their best interests. In the last analysis it is the business of the Church to keep that ideal before men, and if the net result of the modern socialistic movement should be to stimulate the Church to attend more strictly than before to this great mission, her representatives may well "thank God and go forward."